





## Heart Attack

A heart attack typically occurs from the narrowing or blockage of an artery supplying blood and oxygen to heart tissue. The resulting damage to the heart may inhibit its ability to effectively pump blood through the body and can cause lifelong disabilities.

### Physical Assessment (DOTS)

Look and feel for:

- Cool, moist, pale skin
- Sweating
- Difficulty breathing



### Patient History (SAMPLE)

Ask about:

- History of heart problems
- Pain, severe pressure, or discomfort in chest, which may radiate through neck, jaw, upper back, and arms
- Nausea, shortness of breath

### Care for the Patient

- Time is critical, activate EMS early.
- Keep the patient still and at rest in a comfortable position.
- Reassure and calm the patient.
- Prevent heat loss from the body.
- Provide any indicated care as determined by Ongoing Assessment. If available, bring an AED to patient's location.
- Provide emergency oxygen if available and you are trained to use it.

### Additional Considerations

- A patient with a history of heart problems may carry a medication for chest pain called nitroglycerin. Assist the patient in taking the prescribed dose.
- A patient experiencing a heart attack may deny he is having one. This is a common occurrence and should not keep you from caring for the patient. Anyone suspected of having a heart problem should be evaluated by EMS.
- Heart attacks are usually related to the development of cardiovascular disease. Modifying risk factors that contribute to heart disease may reduce an individual's chance of having a heart attack.
- The risk factors associated with heart disease are stress, smoking, high blood pressure, lack of exercise, high cholesterol, a diet high in saturated fats and sodium, and diabetes. Age, race, and heredity can also play a role.